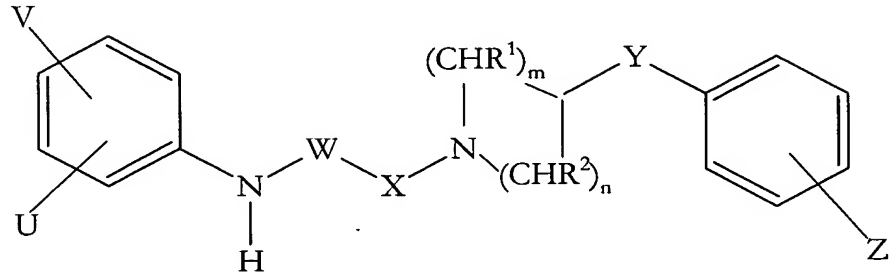
We claim:

1. A compound comprising a structure of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, -CH_2- or -CH_2-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, -N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -C_1-C_4 alkylene-N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -CH_2O-, -CH(OH)- or -OCH_2-;

Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof.

2. The compound of claim 1 wherein -$(CHR^1)_m$ and -$(CHR^2)_n$ are each -CH_2-CH_2-.

3. The compound of claim 2 wherein W is -CH_2-.

4. The compound of claim 2 wherein W is -CO-.

5. The compound of claim 2 wherein V and U independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino.

6. The compound of claim 2 wherein V and U together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups.

7. The compound of claim 6 wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring combines with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring.

8. The compound of claim 6 wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring is morpholine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, oxo-pyrrolidine, thioxo-pyrrolidine, pyrazole, pyrazolidine, imidazole, oxo-imidazole, thioxo-imidazole, imidazolidine, oxo-imidazolidine, thioxo-imidazolidine, 1,4-oxazine, oxazole, oxazolidine, oxo-oxazolidine, thioxo-oxazolidine or 3-oxo-1,4-oxazine.

9. The compound of claim 3 wherein V and U independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino.

10. The compound of claim 3 wherein V and U together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups.

11. The compound of claim 10 wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring is morpholine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, oxo-pyrrolidine, thioxo-pyrrolidine, pyrazole, pyrazolidine, imidazole, oxo-imidazole, thioxo-imidazole, imidazolidine, oxo-imidazolidine, thioxo-imidazolidine, 1,4-oxazine, oxazole, oxazolidine, oxo-oxazolidine, thioxo-oxazolidine or 3-oxo-1,4-oxazine.

12. The compound of claim 4 wherein V and U independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino.

13. The compound of claim 4 wherein V and U together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) $-CH_2-$ groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups.

14. The compound of claim 13 wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring is morpholine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, oxo-pyrrolidine, thioxo-pyrrolidine, pyrazole, pyrazolidine, imidazole, oxo-imidazole, thioxo-imidazole, imidazolidine, oxo-imidazolidine, thioxo-imidazolidine, 1,4-oxazine, oxazole, oxazolidine, oxo-oxazolidine, thioxo-oxazolidine or 3-oxo-1,4-oxazine.

15. The compound of claim 1 wherein the compound is:

2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-indol-5-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-5-yl) acetamide;

2-(4-benzyl-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-indol-5-yl)-acetamide;

2-(4-benzyl-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-5-yl)-acetamide;

2-(4-benzyl-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-acetamide;

5-{ 2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-ethylamino}-1,3-dihydro-benzoimidazol-2-one;

6-{2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-ethylamino}-3H-benzoxazol-2-one;

2-[4-(4-methylbenzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(3-oxo-3,4-dihydro-2H-benzo[1,4]oxazin-7-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-[4-methyl-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-indol-5-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-chloro-phenoxy)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-5-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-(4-chloro-phenoxy)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-(4-chloro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-chloro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-5-yl) acetamide;

2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-2-(4-p-tolyloxy-piperidin-1-yl)-acetamide;

2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-lH-benzimidazol-6-yl)-2-(4-p-tolyloxy-piperidin-l-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-chloro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-indol-5-yl)-acetamide;

6-[2-(4-benzyl-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-ethylamino]-3H-benzoxazol-2-one;

2-(4-benzyl-piperidin-1-yl)-N-(2-mercapto-3H-benzimidazol-5-yl)-2-oxo-acetamide;

2-(4-benzyl-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzothiazol-6-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-N-(2-mercapto-3H-benzimidazol-5-yl)-2-oxo-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzothiazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzothiazol-6-yl)-2-(4-p-tolyloxy-piperidin-l -yl)-acetamide;

N-(2-mercapto-3H-benzimidazol-5-yl)-2-(4-p-tolyloxy-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-acetamide;

2-[4-(4-methyl-benzyl)-piperidin-1-y1]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl] acetamide;

2-[4-[4-methoxy-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-[3-methoxy-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-[3-methyl-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-(4-cyano-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-[3-fluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yL]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-acetamide;

2-[4-(2,4-difluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl) acetamide;

6-(2-[4-(4-methyl-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-ethylamino}-3H-benzoxazol-2-one;

2-[4-(3,4-difluoro-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-(4-methyl-benzyl)-piperidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahidro-quinolin-6-yl acetamide;

2-[4-(4-methyl-benzyl)-piperidin-1-Yl)-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzothiazol-6-yl) acetamide;

2-[4-(4-chloro-phenoxy)-piperidin-1-yl]-2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzothiazol-6-yl) acetamide; or

2-oxo-N-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-benzoxazol-6-yl)-2-(4-p-tolyloxy-piperidin-1-yl)-acetamide;

or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof.

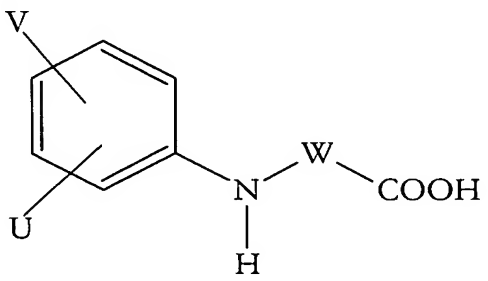
16. The compound of claim 1 wherein the compound is a functional antagonist of NMDA receptors.

17. The compound of claim 16 wherein the compound is a functional NR2B subtype specific NMDA receptor antagonist.

18. The compound of claim 16 wherein the compound exhibits an IC_{50} value of less than 50 μM in a NMDA antagonism or binding test.

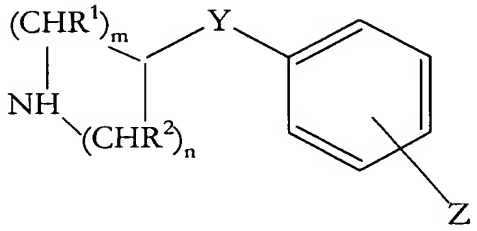
19. The compound of claim 18 wherein the compound exhibits an IC_{50} value of less than 5 μM in a NMDA antagonism or binding test.

20. The compound of claim 1, which is synthesized by a method comprising reacting a carboxylic acid of formula (II):



(II)

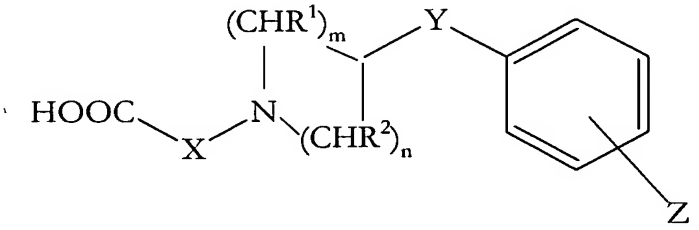
wherein U, V and W are as defined in claim 1, or a reactive derivative thereof, with an amine of formula (III):



(III)

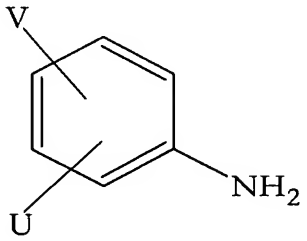
wherein R^1, R^2, Y, Z, n and m are as defined in claim 1.

21. The compound of claim 1, wherein W is -CO-, synthesized by a method comprising reacting a carboxylic acid of formula (IV):



(IV)

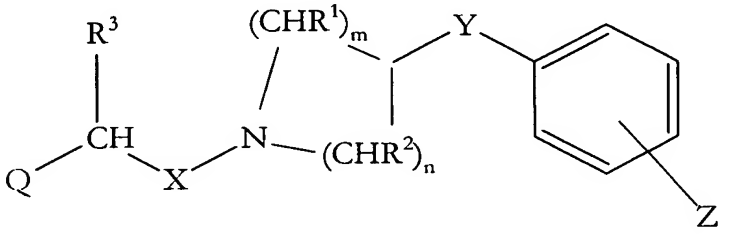
wherein X, R^1, R^2, Y, Z, n and m are as defined in claim 1, or a reactive derivative thereof, with an amine of formula (V):



(V)

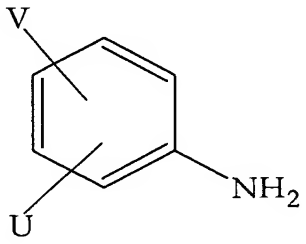
wherein U and V are as defined in claim 1.

22. The compound of claim 1, wherein W is $-CH_2-$ or $-CH_2-(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-, synthesized by a method comprising reacting a halogen derivative of formula (VII):



(VII)

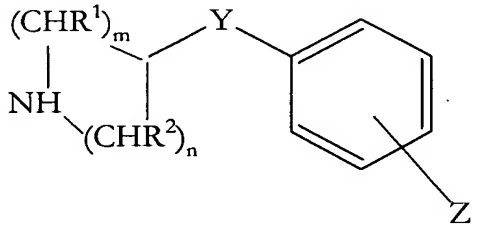
wherein Q is halogen, R^3 is hydrogen atom or a C_1-C_4 alkyl and X, R^1, R^2, Y, Z, n and m are as defined in claim 1 with an amine of formula (V):



(V)

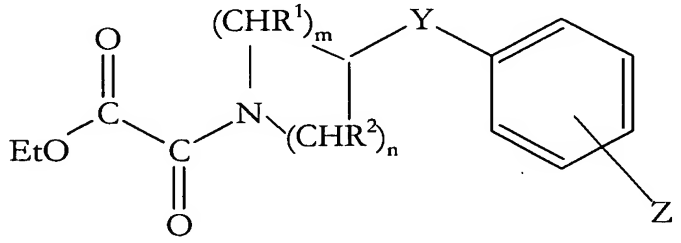
wherein U and V are as defined in claim 1.

23. The compound of claim 1 synthesized by a method comprising reacting a secondary amine of formula (III):



(III)

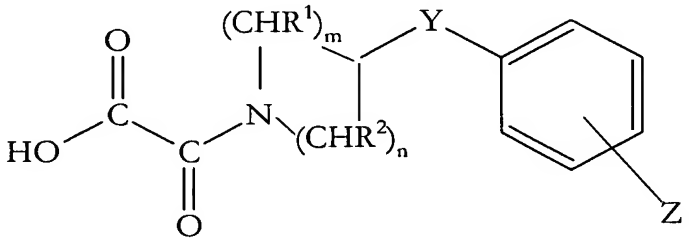
where R^1, R^2, m, n, Y and Z are as defined in claim 1 with ethyl oxalylchloride in the presence of a solid-supported base in dichloromethane to produce an ester compound of formula (VIII):



(VIII)

wherein R^1, R^2, m, n, Y and Z are as defined as in claim 1;

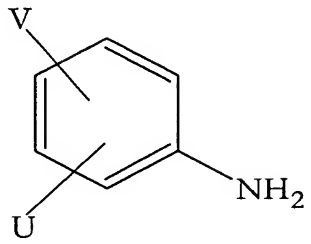
saponifying the ester compound of formula (VIII) with a strongly basic ion exchange resin in ethanol to produce an oxalamid acid of formula (IX):



(IX)

where R^1, R^2, m, n, Y and Z are as defined in claim 1; and

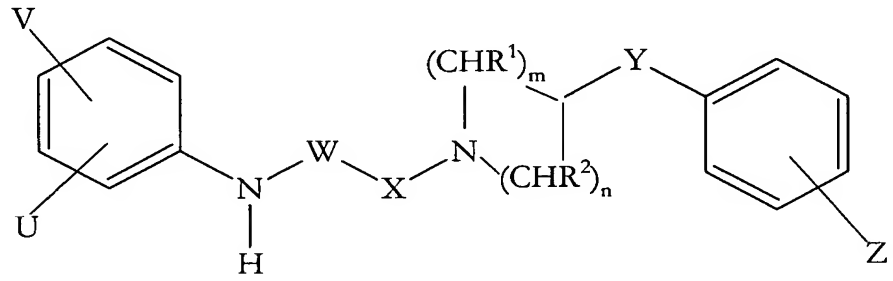
reacting the oxalamid acid of formula (IX) with an amide of formula (V):



(V)

wherein U and V are as defined in claim 1 in a mixture of dichloromethane and dimethylformamide in the presence of 1-[3-(dimethylamino)-propyl]-3-ethylcarbodiimide to produce the compound of claim 1.

24. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a biologically effective dose of a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, -CH_2- or -CH_2-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, -N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -C_1-C_4 alkylene-N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -CH_2O-, -CH(OH)- or -OCH_2-;

Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, and one or more pharmaceutical carriers.

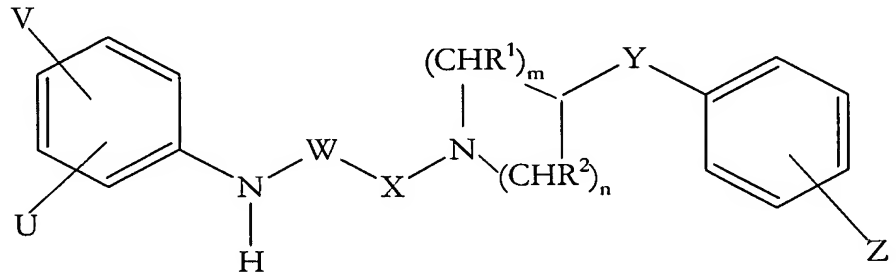
25. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 24 wherein the compound is a functional antagonist of NMDA receptors.

26. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 25 wherein the compound is a functional NR2B subtype specific NMDA receptor antagonist.

27. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 24 wherein the pharmaceutical composition contains 0.01 to 100 mg of the compound in a single dosage unit.

28. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 24 wherein the pharmaceutical composition is in the form of a tablet.

29. A process for synthesizing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, -CH_2- or -CH_2-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, -N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -C_1-C_4 alkylene-N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -CH_2O-, -CH(OH)- or -OCH_2-;

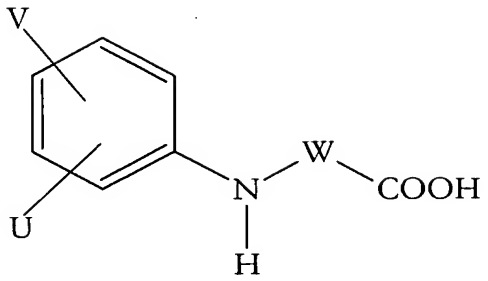
Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

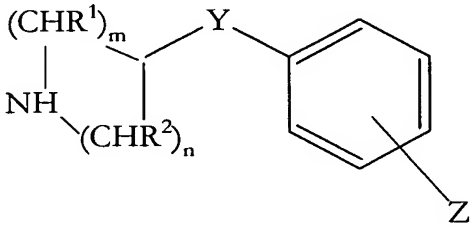
or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, comprising:

reacting a carboxylic acid of formula (II):



(II)

wherein U, V and W are as defined above, or a reactive derivative thereof, with an amine of formula (III):

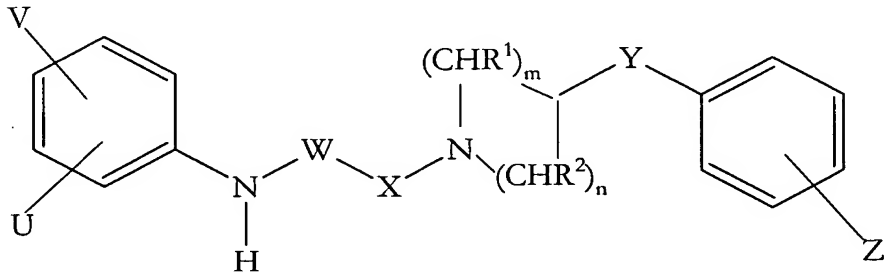


(III)

wherein R^1, R^2, Y, Z, n and m are as defined above.

30. The process of claim 29 wherein the reactive derivative of the carboxylic acid of formula (II) is formed using O-benzotriazol-1-yl-N,N,N',N' tetramethyluronium hexafluorophosphate.

31. A process for synthesizing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) $-CH_2-$ groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, $-CH_2-$ or $-CH_2-(C_1$-C_4 alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, $-N(C_1$-C_4 alkyl)-, $-C_1$-C_4 alkylene-$N(C_1$-C_4 alkyl)-, $-CH_2O-$, -CH(OH)- or $-OCH_2-$;

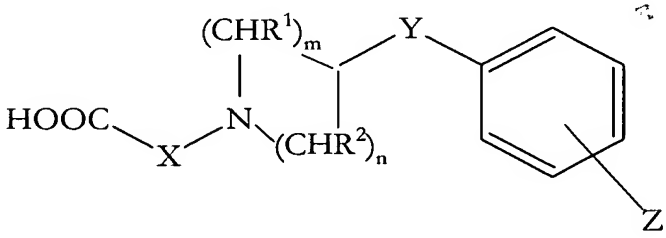
Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

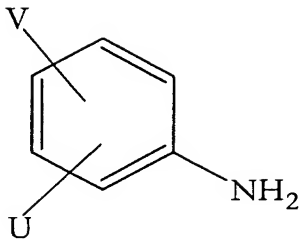
or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, comprising:

reacting a carboxylic acid of formula (IV):



(IV)

wherein X, R^1, R^2, Y, Z, n and m are as defined above, or a reactive derivative thereof, with an amine of formula (V):

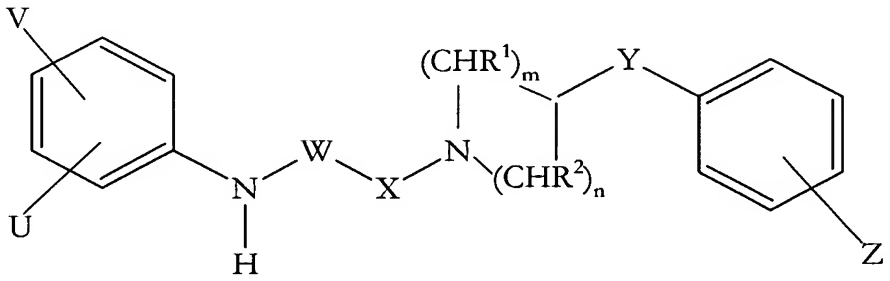


(V)

wherein U and V are as defined above.

32. The process of claim 31 wherein the reactive derivative of the carboxylic acid of formula (IV) is formed using O-benzotriazol-1-yl-N,N,N',N' tetramethyluronium hexafluorophosphate.

33. A process for synthesizing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is $-CH_2-$ or $-CH_2-(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

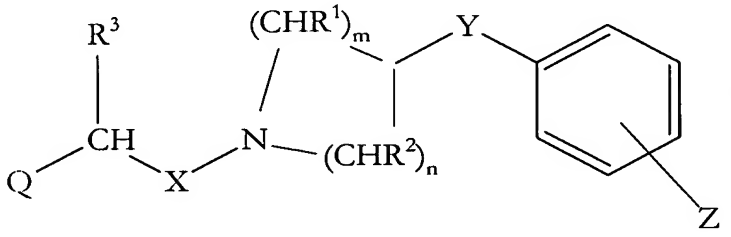
Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, $-N(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-, $-C_1-C_4$ alkylene-$N(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-, $-CH_2O-$, -CH(OH)- or $-OCH_2-$;

Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

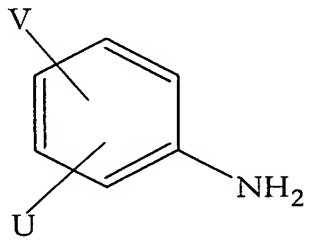
n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, comprising: reacting a halogen derivative of formula (VII):



(VII)

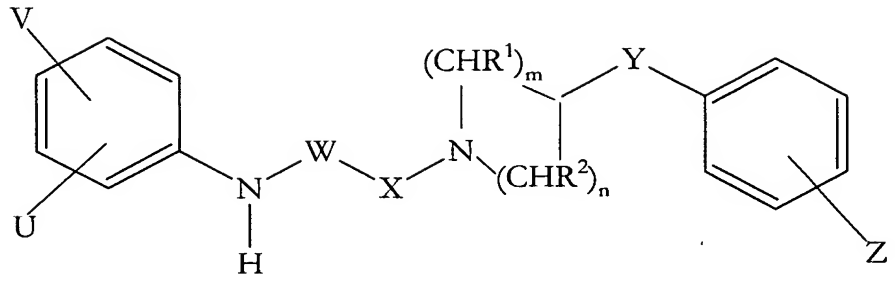
wherein Q is halogen, R^3 is hydrogen or a C_1-C_4 alkyl and X, R^1, R^2, Y, Z, n and m are as defined above with an amine of formula (V):



(V)

wherein U and V are as defined above.

34. A process for synthesizing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, -CH_2- or -CH_2-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, -N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -C_1-C_4 alkylene-N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -CH_2O-, -CH(OH)- or -OCH_2-;

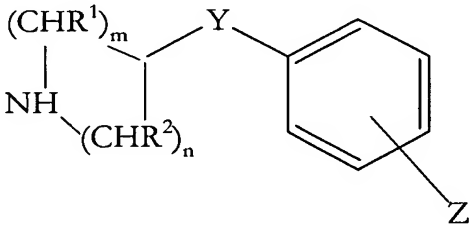
Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

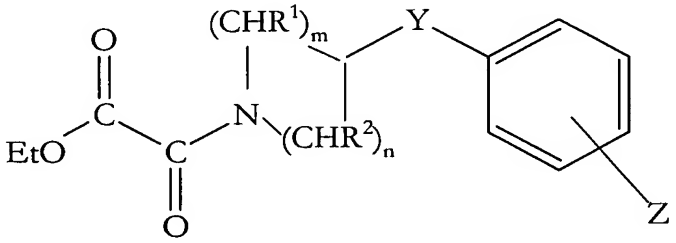
or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, comprising:

reacting a secondary amine of formula (III):



(III)

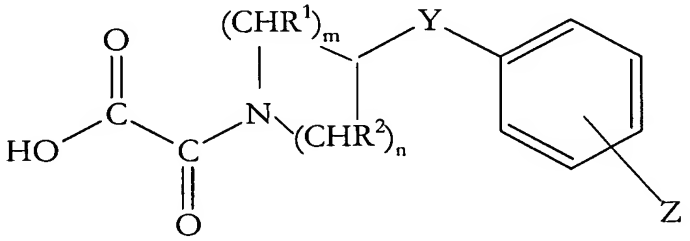
where R^1, R^2, m, n, Y and Z are as defined above with ethyl oxalylchloride in the presence of a solid-supported base in dichloromethane to produce an ester compound of formula (VIII):



(VIII)

wherein R^1, R^2, m, n, Y and Z are as defined above,

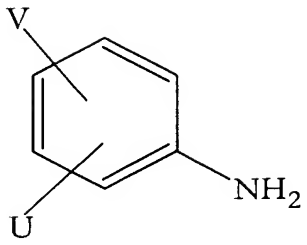
saponifying the ester compound of formula (VIII) with a strongly basic ion exchange resin in ethanol to produce an oxalamid acid of formula (IX):



(IX)

where R^1, R^2, m, n, Y and Z are as defined above, and

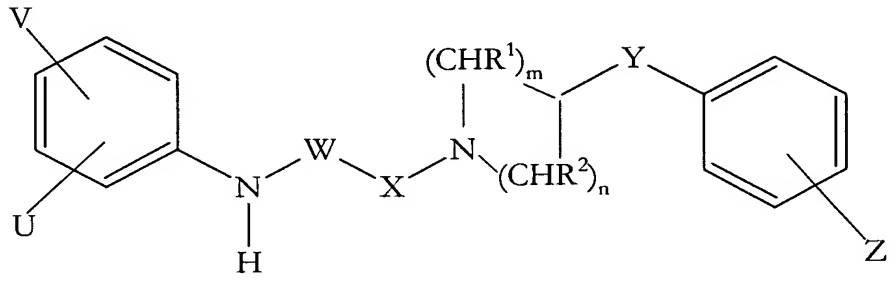
reacting the oxalamid acid of formula (IX) with an amide of formula (V):



(V)

wherein U and V are as defined above in a mixture of dichloromethane and dimethylformamide in the presence of 1-[3-(dimethylamino)-propyl]-3-ethylcarbodiimide to produce the compound of claim 1.

35. A process for manufacturing pharmaceutical compositions comprising mixing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, $-CH_2-$ or $-CH_2-(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, $-N(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-, $-C_1-C_4$ alkylene-$N(C_1-C_4$ alkyl)-, $-CH_2O-$, -CH(OH)- or $-OCH_2-$;

Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

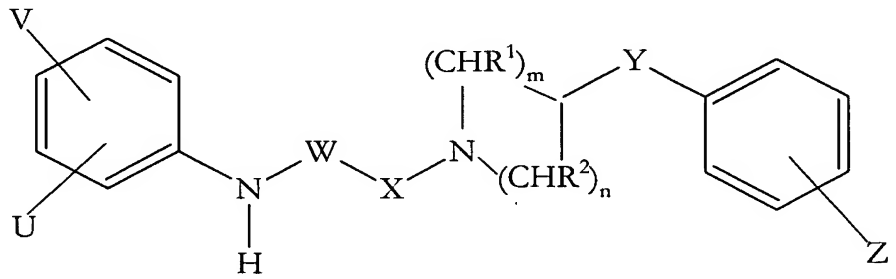
n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, with a pharmaceutical carrier.

36. The process of claim 35 wherein the compound is a functional NR2B subtype specific NMDA receptor antagonist.

37. The compound of claim 1 wherein the compound is employed to alleviate a symptom of a disease or disorder in a mammal by administering the compound, or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof, to the mammal in an amount effective for alleviating at least one symptom of the disease or disorder, wherein the disease or disorder is a traumatic injury of a brain or spinal cord, human immunodeficiency virus related neuronal injury, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, tolerance or dependence to opioid pain treatment, withdrawal syndromes from alcohol, opioids or cocaine, ischemic CNS disorders, chronic neurodegenerative disorders, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, pain, epilepsy, anxiety, depression, migraine, psychosis, muscular spasm, dementia, hypoglycemia, degenerative disorders of the retina, glaucoma, asthma, tinnitus or hearing loss.

38. A method for alleviating a symptom of a disease or disorder in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

V and U: independently are hydrogen, halogen, hydroxyl, cyano, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylamino, arylamino, halogen substituted arylamino, aralkylamino, halogen substituted aralkylamino, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, halogen substituted C_1-C_4 alkanoylamido, arylsulfonamido, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyloxy, carboxyl, carbamoyl, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-CH_2-, C_1-C_4 alkyl-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-SO_2-NH-, NH_2-$(CH_2)_{1-4}$-(CO)-NH-, NH_2-SO_2-, -CHO, -CH_2-NH_2, hydroxymethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy methyl, halogenmethyl, tetrazolyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, amino substituted C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, amino substituted C_1-C_6 alkanoyloxy, phenyl, amino substituted phenyl or acetylamino; or

together form a group that contains one or more heteroatoms, and that taken together with one or more:

(a) hydrogen atoms;

(b) carbon atoms;

(c) -CH= groups;

(d) -CH_2- groups; or

(e) additional heteroatoms of the same or different type;

or any combination thereof, form a 4-7 membered homocyclic or heterocyclic ring, wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring may combine with the phenyl group to form a bicyclic ring, and wherein the homocyclic or heterocyclic ring or the bicyclic ring may contain one or more oxo, thioxo, amino, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, =S or -SH groups;

W: is -CO-, -CH_2- or -CH_2-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-;

X: is -CO-;

Y: is -O-, C_1-C_4 alkylene, C_1-C_4 alkynylene, cycloalkylene, aminocarbonyl, -NH-, -N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -C_1-C_4 alkylene-N(C_1-C_4 alkyl)-, -CH_2O-, -CH(OH)- or -OCH_2-;

Z: is hydrogen, halogen, nitro, amino, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, cyano, trifluoromethyl, hydroxyl or carboxyl;

R^1 and R^2: are hydrogen, or together form a C_1-C_3 bridge; and

n and m: independently are 0-3, wherein n and m cannot each be 0;

or an optical antipode, racemate or pharmaceutically-acceptable salt thereof,

wherein the compound of formula (I) is administered in an amount effective for alleviating at least one symptom of the disease or disorder, and

wherein the disease or disorder is a traumatic injury of a brain or spinal cord, human immunodeficiency virus related neuronal injury, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, tolerance or dependence to opioid pain treatment, withdrawal syndromes from alcohol, opioids or cocaine, ischemic CNS disorders, chronic neurodegenerative disorders, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, pain, epilepsy, anxiety, depression, migraine, psychosis, muscular spasm, dementia, hypoglycemia, degenerative disorders of the retina, glaucoma, asthma, tinnitus or hearing loss.